

importance to the patient of surgical interference with as little delay as possible, proceed to operate, or should they respect his irrational objection to the operation and allow the condition to proceed to its inevitably fatal termination? There is only one way in which a situation of this kind can with safety be handled. Application should be made to the superior court for the appointment of a guardian. Almost any judge of a superior court, if the circumstances are properly explained to him by reputable medical men, would appoint a guardian of the person of such patient and such guardian could then authorize the operation. If this is not done, no matter how successful the operation may be, if the patient on recovery saw fit to do so, he could bring suit against the surgeon for trespass upon his person and would be entitled to damages.

#### MANY THANKS!

May 13th, 1916.

My Dear Dr. Jones:

I have just a moment to spare in which to commend you in the zeal and activity manifested in getting "Dr." Hartland Law squelched in his advertising scheme connected with the State University; a good watchman you are on the tower and your success in this matter indicates that gray matter fearlessly used can triumph over foul smelling millions. May your good work be long felt and as similar things come with passing time I wish you the same success in dealing with them. No doubt the profession in all parts of the state will read with profound interest what you say of the case in the May JOURNAL.

Very sincerely yours,

A. B.

#### HELPFUL SUGGESTIONS.

At the Fresno meeting of the State Society a new plan of registration was put into effect. Instead of crowding around and awaiting an opportunity to sign a book, cards were supplied which could be filled out and handed in to the registration clerk. On these cards a space was provided with request for suggestions or recommendations. Something over 350 of these cards were filled out and handed in, and out of the whole number there were four on which, under this space for remarks and suggestions, comment appeared. In one case the suggestion was to change the time of meeting, which is established by the constitution and by-laws and a change in which has on several occasions been discussed by the House of Delegates and rejected. In two cases approval of the proposed indemnity fund was given. The remaining member—and may Heaven shine upon him for all the rest of his days!—merely said that he was satisfied with everything. If some of the members who talk amongst themselves, apparently objecting to almost everything, would only avail themselves of an opportunity of this kind and supply the office of the Society with helpful suggestions, their courtesy in so doing would be highly appreciated. As we have before remarked,

neither the Secretary nor anyone employed by the society happens to be a mind-reader.

#### A. M. A. DIRECTORY.

The last edition of the American Medical Association Directory was issued about the middle of April, and to anyone needing reference to the names of physicians throughout the United States it is practically invaluable. It is not at all difficult to master the signs and symbols used to indicate connection with societies, specialties, etc., and at a glance one may form a reasonably good idea of the character of a physician in almost any part of the United States. The Association is to be highly commended upon the publication of this invaluable work.

#### OWNERSHIP OF X-RAY PLATES.

This question has been raised repeatedly and presented itself at the Fresno meeting, as will be seen from the minutes of the House of Delegates. A careful search of the records of decided cases in this country reveals the fact that there has been made no decision covering this point. A few decisions in regard to photographs have been made, and these will be found, together with some comment on the subject, elsewhere in this issue of the JOURNAL. The matter of having in one's possession an X-ray plate of a fracture or a condition where the X-ray plate offers illuminating information, is of the greatest importance. It should be a fixed rule, never broken by any member of the society, to take or have taken and keep in his possession such X-ray plate or plates. He should not give them up under any circumstances, unless ordered to do so by a court and if such a condition should arise this society will handle the legal end of it.

#### A. M. A. LIBEL SUIT.

The widely celebrated suit against the *Journal of the American Medical Association* and its editor, Dr. George H. Simmons, by John A. Patten and the Chattanooga Medicine Company, is at least temporarily stopped owing to the death of Mr. John A. Patten. Whether or not the trial of the case will be resumed is uncertain. Mr. Patten died in a hospital in Chicago on April 26th and, as nearly as can be determined by the newspaper reports, from some intestinal complication. Those who have been following the transcript of the testimony, published from week to week in the *Journal A. M. A.*, will have noticed how heavily the case was going against the Wine of Cardui people.

#### THE "PRACTICAL NURSE" AGAIN.

Another suit for damages for alleged malpractice, which was tried and won by the defendant physician not very long ago, brings out very forcibly the danger to the physician when the patient is cared for by a "practical nurse." It is true that in many cases, particularly confinement cases, the patient cannot afford to employ the services of the trained nurse and therefore engages the